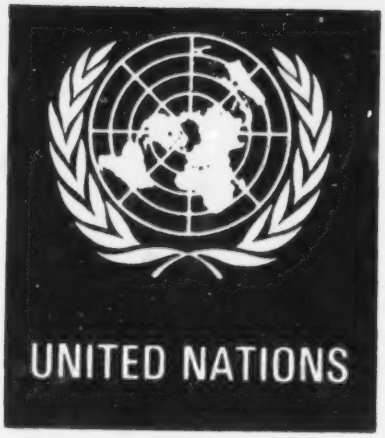

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN MEETING IN SUPPORT OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Windhoek
20 to 22 April 1999

99-22768

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1 - 5	3
II.	Opening statements	6 - 13	3
III.	Plenary sessions	14 - 51	6
IV.	Closing statements	52 - 55	18

Annexes

I.	Windhoek Declaration	20
II.	List of participants	23

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held in Windhoek from 20 to 22 April 1998, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 53/39 and 53/40 of 2 December 1998.

2. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee, who acted as Chairman of the Meeting; Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, who acted as Vice-Chairman of the Meeting: George Saliba, Rapporteur of the Committee and Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Meeting; Martin Andjaba (Namibia), who also acted as Vice-Chairman; and Nasser M. Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The African Meeting consisted of an opening meeting and three plenary meetings, followed by a closing meeting. Plenary I was entitled "Promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people – a key to peace in the Middle East", plenary II drew on the role of Africa in supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; and plenary III focused on the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority.

4. Presentations were made by 23 experts from Africa and other regions, including Palestinians and Israelis. Each plenary meeting included a discussion period open to all participants. Representatives of 28 Governments, Palestine, 3 intergovernmental organizations, 5 United Nations bodies and agencies and 5 non-governmental organizations, as well as special guests of the host country and representatives of the media, universities and institutes attended the African Meeting.

5. The main points of the discussion were highlighted in the final document of the African Meeting, the Windhoek Declaration (annex I).

II. Opening statements

6. The opening meeting was addressed by **Theo-Ben Gurirab**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia. He recalled that, throughout history, Palestinians and Namibians had often converged at the same crossroads. Their land had become mandated territories after the First World War and, instead of that leading to self-determination and independence, it had turned into brutal suppression of the two peoples. Hundreds of thousands of them had been forced to join the armies of the world's refugees and many had become freedom fighters, joining the ranks of the liberation movements. They had found international solidarity and diplomatic recognition, as well as political and moral support for their just causes. He said that Israel and apartheid South Africa had combined their resources to fight the liberation movements and neighbouring States, which had become targets of persistent acts of destabilization, military occupation and political assassinations. They had also introduced nuclear weapons into the Middle East and southern Africa. He went on to say that, during the dark days of their struggle

for their peoples' just rights and legitimate aspirations, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) were missing strong support from Western countries, the same countries that today debate democracy, human rights, humanitarian disasters and ethnic massacres in many places in the world, including Africa.

7. Turning to the activities of the United Nations, he recalled the establishment, by the General Assembly, of three important committees, the Special Committee against Apartheid, the United Nations Council for Namibia and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which had been, and in the case of the latter, continued to be instrumental in United Nations activities to pursue a just and comprehensive settlement of the respective conflicts. He commended the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for promoting a just solution based on the inalienable rights and the social well being of the Palestinian people. He pledged every possible support by his country, which was a member of the Committee, in particular with regard to the decisions by the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and to promote and support the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority. He emphasized that Namibia, which had full diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, considered that Israel had a legitimate security concern that must be assured by a speedy and unscrupulous implementation of the principle of land for peace. Namibia also supported the Palestinian cause within the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

8. A message from the **Secretary-General of the United Nations** was read by his representative, Chinmaya Gharekhan, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. In his message, the Secretary-General recalled that, since the beginning of the current peace process, the United Nations had sought to help build a solid foundation for peace on the ground. Over the years, those efforts had focused on developing infrastructure, enhancing institutional capacity and improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people. He stressed the fundamental importance of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for the Palestine refugees and renewed his appeal to the international donors to pledge generous support for UNRWA in its key role in alleviating the plight of those refugees.

9. He said in his message that the world was preparing for the celebration of the new millennium and that pilgrims from all over the world would converge on the holy sites of Bethlehem in a spirit of reconciliation and peace. He recalled that the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority had the full support of the United Nations through the involvement of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank. The United Nations shared the hope that the investment in Bethlehem would help strengthen the Palestinian economy and build further foundations for peace. He emphasized that the road to peace in the Middle East had been long and arduous. He called upon the parties not to surrender to despair and disillusion, but to reinvigorate their efforts to bring the permanent status negotiations back

on track, and to strive to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, based on the principles enshrined in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and reflected in the Oslo Accords.

10. **Ibra Deguène Ka**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, recalled that the Namibian people had traditionally enjoyed close ties and solidarity with the Palestinian people, having shared a common experience of struggle against foreign domination and oppression. Whereas Namibia had attained its independence almost 10 years ago, the Palestinians continued to live under an illegal occupation despite their heroic struggle and despite the efforts to institute a peace process. At the end of a five-year interim period as foreseen in the Declaration of Principles the supporters of the peace process were frustrated and in despair. He said that the Wye River Memorandum had renewed hope for a resuscitation of the peace process. However, whereas the Palestinians had implemented their part, the Israeli Government had decided not to honour its commitment to progressive troop withdrawals and releases of Palestinian prisoners. Instead, Israel had imposed additional conditions and stepped up its illegal settlement-building programme in the Palestinian territory, in particular in East Jerusalem.

11. He noted that the Israeli Government had moved to tighten its control of occupied East Jerusalem, despite the fact that Jerusalem was a corpus separatum that should not be part of the Jewish State. An increasing number of Palestinian Jerusalemites had been stripped of their residency by Israel. He condemned those actions as pure provocation, showing complete disregard for the will of the international community and the need for reconciliation between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. They also constituted a flagrant violation of the spirit and letter of the agreements signed by the two parties and guaranteed by their cosponsors. He emphasized that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) provided the framework for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and for the attainment by the Palestinian people of those rights as required by international law. Referring to the recommendation by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session that the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention convene a conference on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem (resolution ES-10/6), he expressed the hope that that conference would put pressure on Israel to abide by international humanitarian law, and immediately desist from its illegal settlement activities and all other illegal actions. In conclusion, he commended the European Union for its landmark declaration reaffirming the unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination, including the option of a State, that should not be subject to any veto and expressed the hope that that declaration would unblock the way to real dialogue and negotiation.

12. **Suleiman An-Najab**, Member of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Special Envoy of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, recalled the common struggle of SWAPO and the PLO for the same principal goal, independence. He said that the ultra-right forces in Israel were leading the peace process to a dead end and threatened it with collapse. He expressed confidence that the Meeting would provide new ideas as to the way

forward in the face of current difficulties at a time when the Palestinian Central Council was about to convene a special meeting to discuss and adopt resolutions based on the current situation.

13. Statements were also made by the representatives of some Governments and intergovernmental organizations. The representative of China deplored that the agreements between Israel and the PLO had not been properly implemented, and faced grave difficulties. He said that the lengthy stalemate of the Middle East peace process would not only endanger the peace and stability of the region, but would have a negative impact on peace and development in the whole world. He expressed the hope that all parties concerned would abide by the agreements already concluded, and take a flexible and pragmatic attitude to resolve the Palestinian question. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasized the need for Israel to fulfil all United Nations resolutions and to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories. The representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference read out a message from Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization, in which he criticized the Israeli Government for the stalemate in the peace process caused by its refusal to implement concluded agreements, for unilateral measures, in particular its expansion of settlements, including in East Jerusalem, and measures against Palestinian institutions and citizens in East Jerusalem. The message emphasized the importance of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and called upon the international community to support the struggle of the Palestinian people and to exercise further pressure to compel Israel to abide by the relevant United Nations resolutions, to implement concluded agreements and to resume negotiations along the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in accordance with the Madrid peace process. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Gaza Office) described the efforts of his office to institutionalize the PLO's formal commitments to internationally accepted norms and principles of human rights and expressed the hope that the Palestinian people would gain independence, as Namibia had, through a complementary international effort supported by the United Nations.

III. Plenary sessions

Plenary session I
Promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - a key to peace in the Middle East

14. Speakers in the plenary examined the status of the peace process at the end of the interim period and efforts towards the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. They discussed the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as the role of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

15. **Suleiman An-Najab**, Member of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Special Envoy of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, delivered the keynote address. He pointed out that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had become the hostage of the right-wing forces of Israel, who wanted to bring the peace process to an end.

To Mr. Netanyahu, the Palestinians were not equal partners; he wanted to reduce their role to collaborators for the sake of Israel's security. He said that current Israeli policies in some parts of the occupied territory amounted to ethnic cleansing. The thrust of the current Israeli policy was to force the Palestinian Authority to downgrade its expectations. He cautioned that Israel was trying to implement the interim arrangements as the final solution. He stressed that the land-for-peace principle had never been accepted by the current Israeli Government, and instead of abiding by agreements reached at the highest international level, the Israeli Government had pursued policies of colonizing the occupied territory.

16. He emphasized that the Palestinian leadership had fulfilled all its obligations. As a result, despite the efforts of the Israeli Government, the Palestinian cause had made good progress on the international front and succeeded in getting a more even-handed treatment from the present United States Administration. The declaration of a Palestinian State was a matter to be decided exclusively by the Palestinian leadership and no pressure from outside could be accepted. At the same time, he expressed appreciation for the advice received by friends. In conclusion, he pointed to the importance of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to discuss measures of its enforcement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as recommended by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session (resolution ES-10/6) and expressed appreciation for the upgrading of the status of Palestine in the General Assembly.

17. **Latif Dori**, Secretary of the Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, analysed the results of three years of the Government of Prime Minister Netanyahu, whom he said had managed to put the peace process in a deep freeze, had destroyed Israel's trade relations with the Arab States, had undermined relations with Egypt and Jordan and had lost the confidence of leaders in the region and beyond. Under Mr. Netanyahu's Government the needless war of attrition had continued in Lebanon, the policies of closure, settlement and confiscation of Palestinian land had been intensified, as had house demolitions and violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In Israel itself, unemployment has increased sharply, economic recession and impoverishment were mounting and the rule of law collapsing. He emphasized that despite all the difficulties, there could be no return from the peace process. The future of Israel lay in joining the Middle Eastern family of nations. The forthcoming Israeli elections would be crucial to defining the fate of the region for many years to come.

18. He continued by saying that the recent diplomatic offensive by the PLO and Yasser Arafat personally had achieved the unequivocal support by the European Union of the creation of an independent Palestinian State and important improvements of the Palestinian relations with the United States of America. He expressed the view that those diplomatic gains, and the efforts to further extend them, would in time lead to the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. He said that his Meretz Party supported the creation of a Palestinian State and that Israel and a future Palestinian State would maintain relations of peace and coexistence. In conclusion, he read a petition by prominent Israeli public figures, where the creation of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza was supported with a united Jerusalem serving as the capital of both States.

19. **Ibrahim Matar**, Palestinian economist, former Chairman of the Department of Business and Economics of Bethlehem University, traced the history of dispossession of Palestinian land by successive Israeli Governments since 1948. He said that the progressive occupation of Jerusalem had happened in two distinct phases. In May 1948, 60,000 Palestinians had been forced out of West Jerusalem and all homes and land had been seized under the controversial Absentee Property Regulations. During the June 1967 War, Israel had brought East Jerusalem under its control, including the walled Old City, dismissing and disbanding the Palestinian municipality. The fact remained, however, that although Palestinian land had been usurped and the Palestinians declared permanent absentees by the Jewish State, the Palestinian people still held all legal titles in land registries. On 22 June 1967, Israel had formally annexed East Jerusalem, as well as parts of the West Bank, thereby increasing the size of East Jerusalem to three times its original size. Further gerrymandering of boundaries in order to ensure a Jewish majority in any given area had led to other exclusionary practices. One significant development of that policy had been the creation of Jewish "fortress settlements", designed to encircle Palestinian areas and artificially boost Jewish numbers in such areas.

20. He said that, since 1967, the Israeli Government had confiscated some 28,000 dunums of land and real estate (one dunum is equal to 1,000 square meters). That policy had been further expanded upon by applying restrictive building requirements on the Palestinian population, or consigning Palestinian land as "Green Zones" to prevent any Palestinian construction from taking place in such areas. In 1993, Israel had closed access to East Jerusalem for Palestinians from the West Bank. In conclusion, he called for any agreement on Jerusalem to include the relocation of all illegal Jewish settlers from East Jerusalem; repatriation of Palestinians to their homes in West Jerusalem or compensation for those who did not want their property back in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948; the restoration of Palestinian sovereignty to East Jerusalem, as the capital of the Palestinian State; and the declaration of the Holy City of Jerusalem as an open city, freely accessible to people of all three monotheistic faiths.

21. **Gershon Baskin**, Director, Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information, presented slides showing the latest expansion of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Discussing political options for the future, he said that under a Netanyahu Government, there would be no real progress towards a final status agreement. Mr. Netanyahu was firmly opposed to Palestinian sovereignty, because, in his view, it would endanger the existence of Israel. A sovereign Palestinian State could establish its own offensive fighting force, it had full control over its borders, it could enter into military defense pacts and it would control the natural resources of its territory, water, in particular. On the other hand, a left/centre Government would immediately begin final status negotiations, supported by a generous United States Administration.

22. He pointed out that the Palestinians must be better prepared for those negotiations, in order to offset the lack of balance. Israeli positions should be anticipated, Palestinians should present their own programme, agreements should contain contingencies for partial or non-

implementation, including for not meeting timetables, and the negotiating process should be democratized by discussing possible solutions in public. In conclusion, he called for a further democratization of the Palestinian society, political and financial accountability and transparency in order to create the necessary confidence among the Israeli and other international partners.

23. **Elizabeth Sidiropoulos**, Director of Studies, South African Institute of International Affairs, said an important lesson had been learned from the South African experience: true peace was only possible once true reconciliation had taken place. With Mr. Netanyahu's Government consistently failing to recognize the humanity of the Palestinian people, peace in the Middle East remained elusive. Mr. Netanyahu had encouraged, almost belligerently, the continuation of settlement building, which had exacerbated the search for a workable solution to contiguity for a Palestinian State and for Israel's protection of the settler communities. As such, this echoed South Africa's own history of resettlement of Black people under the apartheid policies. Consequently, the Government of South Africa had issued strong calls in that respect upon Israel to halt its expansionist policies, especially in Jerusalem.

24. She said that the relationship between the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples was based on a very unequal balance of power. Under those circumstances, a Palestinian State would resemble a Bantustan at the mercy of Israel. It lacked geographic contiguity and free passage between its various parts; and it would be subject to Israeli border closures, with serious economic consequences. Not having control over water resources undermined the ability of the Palestinians to function independently. She concluded that there was a genuine need for the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to develop a mutually beneficial relationship, authentic reciprocity on security matters and visionary leadership on both sides.

25. **Badr Hammam**, Ambassador and advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, pointed out that there was no difference between the Likud and Labour Parties with regard to Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which completely contradicted the land-for-peace principle. Israel was using the negotiation time to create new facts on the ground. That would lead only to a Bantustan-like entity totally controlled by Israel. A Palestinian State would not be viable. The latest development in that regard was the taking of new hills by settlers to establish a network of colonies that would be connected by bypass roads being controlled by the Israeli army. He emphasized that the settlements were the biggest challenge to the peace process, undermining the quest of the Palestinian people for self-determination and an independent State. He called upon the African Governments not to recognize the Israeli settlements and to refrain from any action that might encourage Israel to continue that policy. The world should not recognize any part of Israel that had not been part of the Jewish State before 1967, and deny all forms of finance, aid or grants that could be used to build new settlements.

26. **John Battersby**, Chief Editor of the *Sunday Independent* (South Africa), said that, in his opinion, every effort should be made to level the playing fields between Israel and the Palestinian people. In that respect, South Africa could play a vital role, both in its capacity as

current chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as through its unique position as a bridge between the countries members of the Group of Eight and the developing world. That position as a bridge-builder was best exemplified by South Africa and Saudi Arabia's brokering of the Lockerbie case and the handing over of Libyan suspects to be tried in the Netherlands under Scottish law. He, however, cautioned against the declaration of a Palestinian State on 4 May, arguing that the Palestinian people should, through the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, pursue the moral high ground and try to level the playing fields between the PLO and Israel before the start of any final status negotiations.

Plenary session II
Role of Africa in supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

27. The participants considered the following themes: action by African States towards promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people within the United Nations system, OAU and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; the experience of African States in the struggle for independence and decolonization; the experience of Africa in the quest for economic independence and sustainable development; prospects for the promotion of bilateral economic cooperation, trade and the establishment of business relationships with the Palestinian people; and the role of civil society (business groups, academic, cultural and religious institutions, the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting institution-building and in enhancing the role of women in society.

28. **Othman Jerandi**, Director for Africa, Department of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, said that the plight of the Palestinian people continued to be of importance to the African nations, and solidarity between the two peoples continued to grow every day. That was best exemplified by the fact that the question of Palestine had remained firmly on the agenda of OAU. During the meeting of the Heads of State and Government at Ouagadougou in June 1998, Israel had been sharply criticized for its attempts to derail the Middle East peace process. The only guarantee for a just and equitable peace in the Middle East would be for parties to abide by the peace agreements. African nations that had diplomatic ties with Israel should apply daily pressure in order to alleviate the difficult situation faced by the Palestinian people. By bringing all African countries in step with the Middle East peace process, pressure on Israeli would be more effective.

29. **Sohoyata Maiga**, Lawyer, Member of the Council on Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs of Mali, said that the Palestinian problem was always on the agenda of the Council of Ministers of OAU. More could be done to bring the cause of the Palestinian people closer to the grass-roots organizations in Africa. African States had fought and struggled to bring about decolonization. The problems and lack of resources faced by the African peoples should not be allowed to impede the closer relations between the African and the Palestinian peoples in the fight for self-determination. There were parallels between the Israeli occupation and apartheid South Africa. She said that Zionism and apartheid were two forms of racism. In May 1978, the OAU Council of Ministers had declared its support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian

people. At the meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Durban in 1998, the Heads of State and Government had reaffirmed their recognition of the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. At the same meeting, the boycott of Israel in all fields had also been decided.

30. **Amadou Kébé**, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of OAU to the United Nations, said that OAU believed that the Palestine question should be considered as a question of human rights and dignity; a question of decolonization; and a specific component of Afro-Arab cooperation. In the Addis Ababa Declaration on the Problem of Palestine and the Middle East of February 1975, the Council of Ministers had stated that the problem of Palestine and the Middle East was an Afro-Arab cause, identical to that of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, and that it was Africa's right and duty to play a constructive role in efforts to establish peace in the Middle East. It was the Council's deep conviction that the question of Palestine was the root cause of the Middle East crisis, causing all the international problems relating to the Arab territories occupied by Israel, as well as attacks on Lebanese territory. The African Ministers had decided to include the Palestine problem as a separate item on the agenda of the twelfth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in 1976 and to invite Chairman Yasser Arafat to address the session. Since then, OAU had continued to support the Palestinian people's liberation struggle on the ground and within international organizations. The most striking illustration of that support was the unanimous decision to break off diplomatic relations and to suspend all economic and commercial ties with Israel. OAU regarded the Palestine problem as an African problem, and would urge its members to do all in their power to promote acceptance of the OAU position on the Palestine problem within the United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and other forums.

31. **Ceciwa Khonje**, former Director of the United Nations Information Centre at Harare, said that the Palestinians simply wanted the implementation of the Partition resolution, allowing them the right to self-determination. Africans, who had known real suffering for hundreds of years of colonization, should be at the forefront of the campaign for Palestinian rights. Liberation movements and its leaders had, for many years, been vilified and labeled as terrorists. But today, the PLO and its leader, Chairman Yasser Arafat, was recognized as a respectable and indispensable negotiating partner for any peace initiative. Palestinian rights was the concern of African countries because any violation of human rights was an attack on all humanity. One's own peace was compromised when other human beings' rights were violated. The negative labels against Palestinians and their cause should be abandoned. Also, to continue to describe the Middle East problem as intractable would be to ignore major positive breakthroughs, dampening the spirits of the negotiators, who must secure the best deal for their people. The struggle for peace in the Middle East was also Africa's struggle. Palestinians and Israelis must remember South Africa and the power of just causes.

32. **Iqbal Jhazbhay**, Director of the Centre for Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University of South Africa, focused on the repeated patterns of error that needed to be avoided as Africa re-energized itself to promote the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. He pointed out that there were four areas in which international actions had often been ineffective:

(a) addressing outside manifestation instead of the internal motivation of the problem, which resurfaced over time; (b) restricting the focus of much of the international response to single actions, such as international or refugee programmes, often negating consideration of other interwoven issues; (c) generally limiting the scope of involvement to certain disciplines or knowledge bases; and (d) maintaining poor communications, both vertical and horizontal, often leading to a breakdown in information sharing and discourse on action plans. As a result, programmes were often not appropriate to existing conditions, or worse, they might even prove harmful. He recommended the establishment, in each country, of a forum for anti-Israeli action looking at sanctions against Israel and drawing from the experience of the anti-apartheid movement and the Special Committee against Apartheid. He said that the forums for action should include policy makers and academics, developing conflict management programmes suited to the Palestinian situation. Further, civil society action should involve labour and, based on the South African experience, should formulate political action and joint investment possibilities. In order to promote such action, he suggested that an NGO conference be convened prior to the next summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Bangladesh.

33. **Abdul Samad Minty**, Deputy Director-General for Multilateral Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the commitment of the Movement to finding a solution to the question of Palestine had initially been articulated at its first conference of Heads of State and Government in Belgrade in 1961. The current Chairman of the Movement, Nelson Mandela, had stated that it was extremely disappointing that after four decades the Movement still remained gravely concerned about the situation in the Middle East, which blocked progress towards a peaceful solution, including the fulfilment of a sovereign State of Palestine. The role of African members of the Movement in the struggle against colonialism and foreign occupation had been crucial. President Mandela, in 1953, had said that to overthrow oppression was the highest aspiration of every free man. The Movement operated within the parameters of the United Nations system. It supported General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine. The upgrading of the status of Palestine, which was a full member of the Movement, had been overwhelmingly supported by the Movement. It also strongly insisted that Israeli representation in the Assembly's work should conform with international law. He pointed to the continued illegal activities of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Consequently, the Movement supported the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly as well as the resolution calling for the convening of the conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on 15 July 1999. The Movement fully supported the work of UNRWA as well as General Assembly resolution 53/27 on Bethlehem 2000. The Palestinians were assured that the Movement, which had steadfastly mobilized international efforts for the demise of apartheid, would continue its solidarity with the Palestinian people until their legitimate aspirations were realized.

34. **Nahas Angula, M.P.**, Minister of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology of the Government of Namibia, focused on a number of issues that characterized the struggle for independence and decolonization in Africa: African identity; primary

resistance; elite agitation; popular resistance; armed struggle; and reconciliation. He said that African identity had been born out of a common bitter experience of slavery, imperialism, colonialism and capitalist exploitation. Those evil forces had helped forge a common consciousness and shared identity that had become crucial during the struggle for independence and decolonization. Anti-colonial struggles had been waged by liberation fighters, which had led to colonial massacres, redrawing of borders and deportation, but the African spirit of resistance, he stressed, had never been defeated.

35. He pointed out that the emergence of African urban elites had led to the formation of cultural groups. Those cultural interest groups had campaigned for autonomy for themselves and their communities, thus giving confidence to African people in their struggle. He said that after the Second World War, African resistance had become mass-based, with trade unions and students' organizations turning to mass political action. That had led to the formation of nationalist political parties, some of which had been inspired by movements led by Mahatma Ghandi and W. E. B. du Bois. Non-violent struggles had proved futile, especially in the case of minority rule and Portuguese colonialism. There had been no alternative but to embark on armed liberation struggle, during which the African peoples had persevered and finally triumphed. He emphasized that the bitter struggle had opened wounds and scars in the body politic, creating an urgency for reconciliation. He said that Namibia had taken that course of action. Although there were detractors to that course, the past 10 years of Namibian peace testified to the sagacity of that policy.

36. **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**, Director-General of the Department of Women Affairs of Namibia, said that without the equal participation of women in the peace process, Palestinian statehood would be slow. Having shared the observer podium at the United Nations with the PLO not long ago, she knew how difficult it was to keep women's issues alive among vital concerns of nations. United Nations committee reports had documented how the Israeli occupation had had a detrimental impact on women's socio-economic condition. Both men and women should be equally involved in the management of a country's business. Various United Nations international conferences and committees had recognized the role of women in issues of human rights and development. Hanan Ashrawi, a long-time spokesperson for the PLO, was a person to be admired for her firmness and articulation of the plight of the Palestinians. For many years, there had been strong ties between African and Palestinian women and that solidarity has not diminished with Namibia's independence. In many international forums, African women continued to support the Palestinian people in the struggle for their inalienable rights.

37. She continued by saying that in most developing countries, women were central to food security. But owing to lack of land ownership, credit and support for production could not be obtained. Globalization flooded the market with imported food which displaced small farmers, most of them women. The Beijing Platform for Action called for gender sensitive policies for economic and social development at national and international levels. The Government of Namibia had included gender mainstreaming in its institutions, but it was still a long way to gender equality. In war and conflict, women were primary victims but remained absent from

negotiations on conflict prevention and resolution. She pointed out that women's experience with conflict in their daily lives made them good negotiators, and that they should be more involved in conflict prevention and resolution. A peaceful environment was key to gender equality, therefore full support should be given to the Palestinian people's quest for peace.

38. **Julien Randriamasivelo**, Head of the African Section, Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization, said that the similarity between Africa's past and the Palestinian people's present was undoubted. Their struggle to free themselves from the Israeli occupier was viewed by the African peoples as an incarnation of their past. That explained their full support for the Palestinian people's quest for self-determination. The presence in Africa of conflicts and civil war, of economic and social difficulties, was not an obstacle to fruitful collaboration between African and Palestinian peoples.

39. He said that the African people and NGOs were increasingly concerned at Israel's disregard for United Nations resolutions relating to the peace process, and their retaliatory measures inflicted on the Palestinian economy, threats against the proclamation of a Palestinian State, as well as acquiring nuclear weapons. African economic independence was hampered by the pursuit of selfish interests of dominating powers. Such policy was applied elsewhere and utmost vigilance was needed to counter it. Extensive economic cooperation should be undertaken and would play a role in reinforcing relations between Africa and the Palestinian people. He expressed the view that hope for peace and stability had vanished as a military alliance might usurp the Security Council's role of conflict resolution. Further, Israel had received unreserved support from a super Power that directed the action of the alliance. He stressed that the United Nations was the sole existing international entity capable of facing the problems accompanying globalization, and should not be ignored. African and Palestinian peoples should have a mutually advantageous cooperation, which would lead to order and stability inside and outside their regions. He suggested that a radio broadcasting station called "The Voice of Palestine" should be created to inform and mobilize African opinion on the question of Palestine.

40. **Umar Birai**, Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja, Nigeria, gave a broad overview of the historical background of the Palestinian problem, from the first waves of Jewish immigration into Palestine around 1881; through the years of the British mandate over Palestine; to the United States' pushing of the Partition resolution in 1947; and to the United Nations' involvement in restoring the Palestinian people's inalienable rights.

41. He said that the question of Palestine was a decolonization problem, and the experience of Namibia and apartheid South Africa was similar to the problem of self-determination in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. African States had actively supported the Palestinian struggle. A number of Nigerian leaders (Messrs. Obasanjo, Buhari and Babangida) had issued key statements in that regard. He emphasized that that support was logical as Africa had suffered from colonialism especially in settler colonies. Citing particular examples from Nigeria,

he said that Africa had so much experience that an independent Palestinian State could learn from. He urged Western countries and potential donors to link future economic and diplomatic assistance to Palestinian democratization. African States should continue their support for an independent Palestinian State at both multilateral and bilateral levels of diplomacy. Africa had much to offer to an independent Palestinian State and had a lot to gain from permanent peace in the Middle East.

42. **Nyasha Masiwa**, Editor, *Southern African Political Economic Monthly* (SAPEM), Zimbabwe, focused on the role of civil society in institution-building and enhancing the role of women. He stated that the primary instruments of civil society had been the written and spoken word, based on the commitment to change the status quo through fulfilment of United Nations resolutions. Civil society in Africa could help tell the story of the Palestinian people. Most people in Africa today were born after 1947 and did not have the historical context in order to assess current developments. The experience of Africa in its struggle for independence enabled it to render material, diplomatic and moral support for the Palestinian people. Further, there was a need to mobilize public opinion, through seminars, meetings and tours, to bring about cooperation between the two peoples destined to share the same land. During the liberation struggle in Africa, women had been participants in communities and organizations, and had become the driving force for pluralism and the observance of human rights. In the Middle East, both Palestinian and Israeli women had suffered as their menfolk had lost their lives in violence and war. It was necessary for women's organizations in Africa to establish links with Palestinian and Israeli women to discuss relevant issues, to exchange experience in conflict resolution and peace dialogue and to enhance confidence-building between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

43. He summarized the critical issues relating to the Palestinian problem, including the assistance needed by the refugees; the detrimental effects of Israeli settlement activities; and the treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. The dire socio-economic conditions were made worse by the closures that restricted passage within the territory as well as passage between the West Bank and Gaza. The closures further negatively impacted Palestinian employment and investor interest. The challenge to civil society was to establish closer collaboration between the United Nations and the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Information should be disseminated through updated videos and literature, films and cultural activities. Civil society should not stop reminding the world that the work was not done until self-determination prevailed throughout the Middle East region.

44. **Stephen Laufer**, Editor, *Business Day*, South Africa, recounted a story about a trip to the Gaza Strip with Palestinian Ambassador Salman El-Herfy when they had had to go through an Israeli checkpoint. Ambassador El-Herfy had been made to go through a separate caged passage entrance reserved for Palestinians, suddenly making him a second-class citizen. The message of the cage was not about security, but of discrimination and subjugation. Being reminded of apartheid South Africa, he realized why the issue of Palestinian statehood was linked to South Africa's freedom. There had been the danger of focusing on the grand political picture, missing the daily realities for ordinary people under occupation. The drama of ordinary

people was hidden behind the great political game. He emphasized that journalists needed to find ways to tell stories of ordinary people and how the failure of the peace agreements affected their lives. Only when the readers saw themselves in the situation of the majority of Palestinians could they identify with them and help to build political pressure to change the situation. African journalists should write stories about the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, and pass on fresh perspective to their audiences. Information trips to the occupied territory would give journalists first-hand experience of the problems of the Palestinians. There was a need to discuss access to United Nations, NGO and private sector funding for such information trips.

45. **Nahla Asali**, Professor of English Literature, Birzeit University, said that in the Palestinian setting, the importance of Palestinian NGOs was significant because of the absence of a national Government to attend to people's needs. Most of the NGOs had been formed in response to the shattering experience that had befallen the Palestinian people some 50 years ago. The major characteristic of Palestinian NGOs was resistance to occupation and struggle for identity and self-preservation. The world community had made funds available for a great number of NGOs that served as hospitals and schools, areas that should have been covered by a ruling Government. By 1992, Palestinian NGOs had been operating 60 per cent of health care facilities and 100 per cent of pre-schools and rehabilitation programmes. With the advent of the Palestinian Authority, which had the task of drafting and passing laws for a nascent entity, NGOs had played a role in law drafting and influenced amendments made by the special legislative committees. Women's groups had lobbied for a civil status law that would provide for more equity for women, especially in family matters. NGOs had also influenced World Bank policy and documented breaches in human rights by the occupying Power. She said that the present situation was best described as a state of limbo, with 4 May fast approaching. For Palestinians, the issue was not the sacredness of the date but the quality of statehood and the scope of its sovereignty. So far what Palestinians had was a fragile and fragmented entity. Referring to the news coverage on Kosovo, she said that Palestinians were able to empathize with a people who were having the same experience as Palestinians had 50 years ago. If a so-called modern world could still not stop atrocities and conflicts, then man's pretensions to civilization were hollow.

46. **Ottilie Abrahams**, Chairperson, Namibia Non-Government Organization's Forum, cited United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, when referring to poverty eradication, as stating that no one sector alone, whether in Government or civil society, was able to eradicate poverty. Cooperation of all sectors was needed to achieve that goal. The role of NGOs was essential to the full development of a mature democracy. However, post-independent Africa was very State-oriented and expected Governments to do everything. Something drastic had to be done to arrest the socio-economic and political decline of Africa. Effective partnerships between Governments and NGOs were lacking and had to be cultivated.

47. She pointed out that women in Namibia were important as they constituted about 50 per cent of the population. Yet, repressive traditional customs still regarded them as inferior human beings. The tribal societies impacted women in the same way. As a majority of the

people lived in the rural areas, the production of food and the care of children was left to women as men moved to urban areas in search of work. She suggested that NGOs could help women with some of their problems, including not being equally represented in leadership positions and poor access to schools. Programmes such as that on affirmative action, currently implemented in Namibia, should be replicated in the rest of Africa. Women in rural areas should have access to technology to increase food production and reduce work time so as to have time to attend educational institutions. The business community could help enhance the role of women in society in various ways, including supporting NGO projects; providing credit facilities and expertise to enable women to go into business; advertising the achievements of NGOs; and by setting timetables for development as well as evaluating implementation.

Plenary session III
Celebrating the new millennium in a global vision of peace and reconciliation – the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority

48. The participants considered the goals and status of the Bethlehem 2000 Project, the role of the international community in its implementation and action by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

49. **Nabeel Kassis**, Minister, Coordinator General of the Bethlehem 2000 Project Authority, who gave the keynote presentation, said that the millennial celebrations in Bethlehem would mark not only a historic religious occasion but would herald the rebirth of the Palestinian nation. The foremost Palestinian national project was the liberation of occupied land and the establishment of a sovereign State. Another Palestinian national project was the Bethlehem 2000 Project, which would send a message of peace to the world. The Palestinian Authority also wished to launch a programme of national development in the city as well as the country as a whole. The festivities would be a manifestation of the Palestinian people's identity and culture, as well as their guardianship of the holy places in the Palestinian territory.

50. The Project had received special support from the Committee of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which had sponsored a successful Conference on Bethlehem 2000 in Rome in February 1999. The General Assembly had adopted resolution 53/27 supporting the Project. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat had formed the International Bethlehem 2000 Committee, comprised of eminent world leaders. Members of the international community had offered hands-on support. He outlined the objectives of the Project: to encourage millions of tourists and pilgrims to visit Bethlehem during the year 2000; to promote Bethlehem's rich past and promise for the future; to jump-start the Palestinian tourism industry; and to enhance economic development of the Bethlehem region and the Palestinian territory. The Project would include rebuilding the city's infrastructure, restoring the cultural heritage of the district, encouraging investment of the private sector, providing services for the celebrations, promoting tourism and holding the celebrations of the Bethlehem 2000 event. He stressed that the cost of the Project was in the millions of dollars, and funding had been secured for 65 per cent of the infrastructure component, and a similar percentage for

cultural heritage. He stressed that the preparations were being coordinated closely with local community institutions and churches were creating more confidence in the viability of the project. He pointed out that while the assistance of the donor countries and various United Nations agencies had greatly contributed to the implementation of the Project, there was still room for additional support. There were funding gaps amounting to over US$ 100 million. He suggested that countries could contribute by organizing cultural events to take place in Bethlehem, thus bringing the peoples of the world closer together.

51. **Rev. Langula E. Kasinge**, General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia, said that the Old and New Testaments of the Bible showed that Namibians had much in common with the Israeli and Palestinian people. Namibians were able to identify with the struggle of the people of Israel as they had been slaves in Egypt and God had led them to the promised land of Canaan. As the Namibian struggle advanced, they also identified with the struggle of the Palestinian people, who had every right to be free and to determine their own destiny. The Council of Churches in Namibia supported the objectives of the Bethlehem 2000 Project, which included encouraging millions of tourists and pilgrims to visit Bethlehem and promoting its rich past and promise for the future; jump-starting the Palestinian tourism industry; and enhancing economic development of the Bethlehem region and beyond. The Namibian churches hoped that Bethlehem 2000 would bring peace and harmony to the Palestinian people and people all over the world.

IV. Closing statements

52. **Mosé Tjitendero**, Speaker of the National Assembly and Member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, summarized the results of the Meeting and said that many speakers had referred to the close similarities in experiences and aspirations between the Namibian and Palestinian peoples, and to the close relationship between SWAPO and the PLO. Both countries had become mandates after the First World War and had subsequently been subjected to the exploitative and degrading experiences of colonial rule. He pointed out that the African Meeting would contribute to educating and sensitizing the people in the southern African region about the issues surrounding the Palestinian question. He emphasized that resolving the Palestinian question was key to the attainment of peace in the Middle East. The Meeting had also served to bring the two peoples together and to create a better understanding and appreciation of the issues at stake. The second aim of the Meeting had been to mobilize support among African countries for the Palestinian cause. He stressed that Africa had been very active through the United Nations, OAU and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and would continue to do so until the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination had been materialized.

53. **Suleiman An-Najab**, Member of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Special Envoy of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Representative of Palestine, expressed his organization's gratitude to the Government of Namibia and its people for their continuous support, and for hosting the important United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. He also commended the tireless

efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People as the political organ dedicated to the fulfilment of all United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine. He thanked the African people for the continued and valuable support they had brought to the cause of the Palestinian people. He also mentioned a special word of appreciation for the deep understanding and solidarity shown by delegates at the Meeting in support of the Palestinian struggle.

54. **Ibra Deguène Ka**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, noted that the United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had focused on the concrete measures to be taken to alleviate the economic situation of the Palestinian people, including the activities surrounding the Bethlehem 2000 Project. He also said that it was agreed that the international community could no longer ignore the suffering of the Palestinian people and, as such, should continue to support the just cause of the Palestinian people during the critical phase in its history. He also took the opportunity to thank the Government of Namibia and its people for hosting the Meeting, which, he said, attested to their continued and active support of the Palestinian people.

55. **George Saliba**, Rapporteur of the African Meeting, introduced the final document of the Meeting, the Windhoek Declaration (see annex I).

ANNEX I

Windhoek Declaration

1. The United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held at Windhoek from 20 to 22 April 1999, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Participants in the Meeting included eminent political personalities from Africa, representatives of Governments, Palestine intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system organizations and agencies, the Palestinian Authority, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the media.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations sent a message addressed to the participants in the Meeting.

3. The Meeting took place at a time when the peace process, nearing the end of the interim period, remained deadlocked owing to the freezing by the Government of Israel of the implementation of the Wye River Memorandum of October 1998. The Meeting was aimed at drawing the attention of the international community to the continuing lack of progress in the peace process, to the unjust and untenable situation faced by the Palestinian people and to the dangers posed by the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Meeting also considered the action by and responsibility of the international community in the implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the role, in that regard, of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention. The Meeting focused on the role of African States in supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and on discussing the international community's action in promoting the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority.

4. The participants discussed in great detail the issue of land confiscation by the Israeli authorities, the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of existing settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Israeli decision to create an "umbrella municipality" in the city and the illegal policy of "silent transfer" of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem from their homes in the city. In this context, the participants welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session of resolution ES-10/6 of 9 February 1999 calling for the convening, on 15 July 1999, of a conference on measures to enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The participants also called upon all Governments, organizations and individuals, as well as the international business community, to refrain from rendering any form of financial, technical or other assistance to Israel that could be utilized towards its settlement activities. In discussing the issue of Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the participants expressed grave concern at

the continued imprisonment of Palestinians in Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Israeli-Palestinian agreements signed to date.

5. The participants considered the role of Africa in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Meeting showed broad support by African States for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of the State. The participants emphasized that that remained a key element for the successful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which was the question of Palestine. The Meeting also demonstrated the determination of African States to contribute to the international efforts towards restarting the peace process in order to allow the parties to proceed to the crucial stage of the permanent status negotiation. In this context, the participants reviewed action taken by African States at various levels, including within the United Nations system, the Organization of African Unity and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

6. The participants exchanged views on the experience of African States in the struggle for decolonization, independence and sovereignty, as well as the experience of Africa in the quest for economic independence and sustainable development. They also discussed prospects for the promotion of bilateral economic cooperation and trade, as well as the establishment of business partnerships with the Palestinian counterparts. The participants recognized the important role played by civil society in the process of institution-building. Special emphasis was laid on the need to enhance and promote the role of women in society.

7. The participants recognized the significance and the implications of the impending end, on 4 May 1999, of the interim period and the possible steps to be taken by the various parties in that regard. In view of a serious legal and political vacuum that the end of the interim period would entail, a broad and determined international action would be required in order to allow the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination and statehood.

8. The participants welcomed the important work done by the Palestinian Authority on the various aspects of the Bethlehem 2000 Project. They stressed that, as the millennial celebrations of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem approached, there was an urgent need for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Palestinian city of Bethlehem. Encouraged by the assistance of the international donor community in rebuilding the Palestinian economy, the participants thanked the Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector, for their support of the Bethlehem 2000 Project. They also recognized the important role played by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Bank and other United Nations system entities in ensuring the success of the Project.

9. The participants noted the important role played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in supporting the Bethlehem 2000 Project

through its programme of activities. They also took note of the Committee's effort to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project at the United Nations. The participants welcomed the fact that, at the request of the Committee, an item entitled "Bethlehem 2000" has been included in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. It has also been included in the provisional agenda of the Assembly's fifty-fourth session. In February 1999, the Committee held a highly successful conference in Rome in support of this Palestinian initiative, hosted by the Government of Italy.

10. In connection with the Meeting, the Chairman of the Committee, Ibra Deguène Ka, and the delegation of the Committee also had the honour and privilege of being received by Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, who welcomed the efforts of the Committee aimed at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

11. The Chairman of the Committee, Ibra Deguène Ka, and the delegation of the Committee also had the honour of being received by Hage Geingob, Prime Minister of Namibia, who stressed the importance of the work done by the Committee in pursuit of peace in the Middle East.

12. In the course of the Meeting, the Chairman and members of the Committee delegation were also received by Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, who encouraged the Committee to continue its important activities aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights.

13. The participants expressed their deep gratitude to Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, Hage Geingob, Prime Minister of Namibia, Mosé Tjitendero, President of the National Assembly, and Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, and to the Government of Namibia for hosting the Meeting and for the assistance and support extended to the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.

Windhoek, 22 April 1999

ANNEX II

List of participants

Speakers

Ottilie Abrahams
Chairperson, Namibia Non-Government Organization's Forum

Suleiman An-Najab
Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Special Envoy of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Nahas Angula
Member of Parliament, Minister of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology of the Government of Namibia

Nahla Asali
Professor of English Literature, Birzeit University

Gershon Baskin
Director, Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information

John Battersby
Chief Editor, *Sunday Independent,* (South Africa)

Umar Birai
Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Abuja, Nigeria

Latif Dori
Secretary, Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue

Theo-Ben Gurirab
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia

Badr Hammam
Ambassador and advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt

Othman Jerandi
Director for Africa, Department of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia

Iqbal Jhazbhay
Director of the Centre for Arabic and of Islamic Studies, University of South Africa

Rev. Langula E. Kasinge
General Secretary, Council of Churches in Namibia

Nabeel Kassis
Minister, Coordinator General of the Bethlehem 2000 Project Authority

Amadou Kébé
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations

Ceciwa Khonje
Former Director of the United Nations Information Centre at Harare

Stephen Laufer
Editor, *Business Day,* South Africa

Sohoyata Maiga
Lawyer, Member of the Council on Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs, Mali

Nyasha Masiwa
Editor, *Southern African Political Economic Monthly (SAPEM),* Zimbabwe

Ibrahim Matar
Palestinian economist, former Chairman of the Department of Business and Economics of Bethlehem University

Abdul Samad Minty
Deputy Director-General, Department of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah
Director-General, Department of Women Affairs of Namibia

Julien Randriamasivelo
Head of the African Section of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos
Director of Studies, South African Institute of International Affairs

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Chinmaya Gharekhan
Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Ibra Deguène Ka
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations;
Chairman of the Committee and Head of Delegation

Ravan A. G. Farhâdi
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations,
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

George Saliba
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations,
Rapporteur of the Committee

Martin Andjaba
Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations

M. Nasser Al-Kidwa
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Governments

Algeria, China, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters

Palestine

United Nations organs, agencies and bodies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations Information Centre, Windhoek

Intergovernmental organizations

Movement of Non-Aligned Countries
Organization of African Unity
Organization of the Islamic Conference

Special guests

Mosé Tjitendero
Speaker of the National Assembly and Member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Hifikepunye Pohamba
Secretary-General, South West African People's Organisation

Barbara Masekela
African National Congress of South Africa

Non-governmental organizations

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
Namibia Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum
National Society for Human Rights
YMCA Kwazulu/Natal Umbogintwini, South Africa
Young Women's Christian Association of Namibia

Media

Allgemeine Zeitung, (Windhoek)
Namibia Press Agency (Windhoek)
NBC
NBC TV
New Era, biweekly edition (Windhoek)
Republikein 2000 (Windhoek)
The Namibian Newspaper

*****